Important Things to Know About Becoming a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Teacher

Some of the terms used in CTE may not be familiar to you - here are brief definitions of some that may be useful to you:

**IEP:** Individual Education Plan - This is a document that a student who has a disability may have that prescribes specific actions to help that student succeed. This may include such things as a student needing a test to be read to them or having more time to finish assignments.

**NOCTI:** National Occupational Competency Testing Institute - This is the end-of program assessment that students take in the spring of their senior year, which includes a multiple-choice test and a hands-on performance component. Students must have completed half of the curriculum to be eligible to take this assessment.

**POS:** Program of Study - This provides an outline of the specific tasks that must be accomplished within a CTE program for a student to complete.

**RUBRIC:** This document clarifies the expectations for a project or writing assignment - it provides feedback for the students and may be used for grading.

**CTSO:** Career and Technical Student Organizations. These are student organizations that are specific to career and technical organizations that have both leadership and career related performance competitions. CTSO involvement has been known to help student grow both professionally and personally.

Supports to Help You

Thought it may feel like it at times, you are not alone in your challenges as a CTE teacher. It is entirely possible that you may be the only teacher at your school teaching in your specific subject area, but there are many people who can assist you. Every teacher, regardless of experience, needs a support system - don't hesitate to reach out.

**Administration:** Your school’s administrators recognize that your first years of teaching can be very challenging. They are there to assist you and can put you in touch with various helpful resources that you may not even be aware of.

**Other CTE Teachers:** Your co-workers can be a valuable source of help and guidance. Your school may have already identified mentor teachers who you should work with. Don’t hesitate to reach out to fellow teachers for ideas and assistance. In most cases you will find that they are happy to help and will learn from your ideas as well.

**Occupational Advisory Committee (OAC):** As helpful as other teachers and administrators are, they most likely are not experts in your content area. When you need to seek input on content related items you can turn to your OAC. These professionals from industry are there to help guide your program and can be a source of great advice and assistance connecting with local industry.

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Produced by members of the Temple University Teacher Leadership Network, 2017
Congratulations for considering a career in teaching! This is an exciting time where you will be making the change from working in an industry to joining the industry of education. While you are likely an expert in your trade, you are going to encounter new experiences in your start as an educator. This can be challenging at times, and in an effort to help you better understand what lies ahead, we have created this informational pamphlet to explain some of the key things you need to know on that path to becoming a CTE teacher.

Just like any other teacher, your requirements are set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). These requirements have changed over the years and will most likely continue to change. Your school is held to these requirements and it is the driving force behind many of the things that will be required of you as a teacher.

**Rewarding Aspects of a Career in CTE**

Part of the reward of becoming a master at your trade is the joy in being able to pass along your knowledge and skills to a new generation of learners. It is said that experience is the best teacher, and sharing your expertise, experiences, and great stories helps to motivate students who have already expressed interest in your trade area.

CTE classes are different from academic classes - the students have CHosen to be in your program, and are more highly motivated to work hard and succeed. Also, CTE teachers frequently have students over multiple years, so they are able to form closer bonds with those students and serve as mentors, as well as educators. If you want to have a positive, lasting impact on the life of a student, CTE lets you have that opportunity.

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**Working in a School**

**Teacher Certification**

**Emergency Certificate:** You usually start teaching with an Emergency Certificate which your school requests from PDE. This certificate expires at the end of the first July after you receive it. You are required to pay PDE for all certificates.

**Occupational Competency Assessment (OCA):** You must register for and pass this test within your first year of teaching. You register for this through Temple University. Part of the OCA requires you to document at least two years of paid work experience, within the last 10 years, in the field which you will be teaching.

**Intern Certificate:** After you pass the OCA you must apply for an Intern Certificate through the PDE TIMS website. The Intern Certificate is valid for only three years. During these three years you must complete the courses required for the Voc. I Certificate.

**Voc. I:** You must apply for this certificate through the PDE TIMS system. The Voc. I certificate is valid for eight years.

**Voc. II:** You must apply for this certificate through the PDE TIMS system. The Voc. II Certificate is valid for 99 years and is considered permanent.

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**Education**

All course work for CTE teachers in the eastern section of the state must be taken through Temple University's Center for Career and Technical Education. You will need to submit all documentation to Temple University such as work experience and transcripts for evaluation. Temple University requires all new CTE teachers to attend a New Teacher Orientation offered in August and January of each year.

Temple University has different paths for each student based on your prior college experience. If you have already completed a Bachelor’s degree you are considered to be a “Graduate” student. If you have an Associate degree or no college experience you are considered to be an “Undergraduate”.

**Voc I Preparation:**

You must complete six classes if you are an undergraduate student. Undergraduate students are required to pass PRAXIS tests in Reading (#5712) and Writing (#5722) in order to apply for the Voc. I Certificate. Graduate students do not need to complete these PRAXIS tests.

**VOC II Preparation:**

You must complete 20 additional classes if you are an undergraduate student or six additional classes if you are a graduate level student. All students are required to pass a PRAXIS test in Math (#5732) in order to apply for the Voc. II Certificate. The Voc. II classes must be completed before the Voc. I Certificate expires.

* Check with your school on its reimbursement policy for tuition and other costs related to becoming certified.